



# Family Hike Recommendations

There are some great nearby hiking trails just waiting to be explored! To get your family started on the right foot, REI employees have selected some of their favorites below.

## Be sure to bring these necessities along in your daypack:

- Drinking water
- Lunch or snacks
- Extra clothing layers
- Map and compass
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen
- First-aid kit
- Insect repellent
- Whistle
- Headlamp or flashlight

For a complete day hiking checklist, visit [Expert Advice](#) on REI.com.



## Here Are Five of Our Favorite Kid-Friendly Local Hikes

### Hike One: **Secret Lake**

Rating: **Easy to moderate**

Distance: **2 miles roundtrip, 500' elevation gain**

**Why This Hike:** It's a fine choice for kids. The higher-elevation trailhead makes it easier to explore upper alpine environments without having to hike long distances. And the finishing touch is a crystalline lake with magnificent views.

**Hike Description:** In the late summer, this hike is nothing short of dazzling, with fields of blue, red and purple wildflowers covering the hillsides. The trail begins on the right side of the campground and heads generally to the west, eventually crossing a little stream. Along the way, you'll get some impressive views of the north face of Devil's Castle. The most difficult section is toward the end—a series of fairly short, gradual switchbacks that leads to Secret Lake. There's not a lot of cover, especially at the top, so bring sunscreen. The unusual spelling of the lake's name speaks to a bit of local history. In the mid-1800s, a description of a nearby mining claim misspelled "Secret," and the name stuck. But however you spell it, the lake remains a beautiful and very popular destination.

**Driving Directions:** Drive 8.5 miles up Little Cottonwood Road to where the paved road ends. Follow the dirt road another 2.5 miles past the campground resort to a clear parking area. Parking is free.

**Tips:** Watch for remnants of the old mining industry that dates to the late 1800s. The area is a great place to show kids how human and natural history have affected the landscape. There are restrooms at the trailhead.

### Hike Two: **The Jordan River Parkway**

Rating: **Easy to moderate, depending on length you choose**

Distance: **0–14 miles roundtrip, no elevation gain**

**Why This Hike:** The Parkway is a beautiful, scenic area right in the middle of the urban Salt Lake Valley.

**Hike Description:** There are plans for this urban trail to eventually extend north and south for 25 miles. Even now, more than 7 miles are complete, with paved hiking and biking paths that follow the Jordan River. You can go for a brief stroll or a long trek, depending on how much time and energy everyone has. Park benches, tables and playgrounds along the way provide scenic spots to rest or have a family picnic. Several parks line the various sections of the trail, including Walden Park, Arrowhead Park and the Redwood Nature Area. The Parkway also offers canoe and non-motorized boat access to the river at Oxbow Park.

**Driving Directions:** The trail lies just west of I-15. Trailheads with restrooms and parking areas are at 1000 W 2320 South, 1050 West 3900 South, and 600 West 4800 South. Some other points that the trail may be accessed from are 950 West 900 South, 1100 West 1700 South, 1100 West 2100 South, 1250 West 6400 South, 1200 West 7000 South, 1250 West 7800 South, and 950 West 9000 South. Parking is free.

**Tips:** You may see a wide range of wildlife, especially migratory birds such as mallard ducks and Canada geese, as well as quail and mourning doves. There are restrooms at the trailheads noted above.

### Hike Three: **Lake Mary Trail**

Rating: **Moderate**

Distance: **2 miles roundtrip, 800' elevation gain**

**Why This Hike:** It's hard to beat the views from this trail—a true classic Wasatch hike.

**Hike Description:** The trail is new and in great condition, thanks to a reroute that was just completed in the fall of 2005. Follow the packed-dirt path up a series of moderately steep switchbacks. The effort is well worth it—you'll pass through patches of wildflowers and forests of limber pine and Engelmann spruce. (Have kids touch the branches of the limber pine, and they'll understand immediately how the trees got their name.) You'll also see some amazing, craggy limestone cliffs and steep dropoffs. You might see some wildlife, too, including moose. But the best part is when you enter the glacier-carved basin that holds Lake Mary. The shoreline of the stunningly blue water surrounded by gigantic boulders makes an awesome rest stop. (Peanut butter sandwiches never had a more dramatic backdrop.)

**Driving Directions:** Follow Big Cottonwood Canyon Road all the way to the top, where it ends at a large parking loop at Brighton Resort. This is approximately 14 miles from the mouth of the canyon. Park near the main lodge and look for the trailhead marker. Parking is free.

**Tips:** If the climb to Lake Mary hasn't left you tuckered, you can continue up the trail to the equally beautiful Lakes Martha (0.3 miles) and Catherine (0.5 miles). There are restrooms in the Silver Lake Interpretive Center near the entrance of the parking lot.

### Hike Four: **Rocky Mouth**

Rating: **Easy**

Distance: **0.5 miles roundtrip, 200' elevation gain**

**Why This Hike:** This short, family-friendly hike is one of the most accessible along the Wasatch. And it ends at a spectacular waterfall!

**Hike Description:** The trail leads up to Eagle Drive and follows the road for a short distance. A well maintained packed-dirt path then picks up again, and passes several residential houses. It gradually winds its way up a narrow rocky canyon, along a stream. At the top, the trail ends at a stunning waterfall that drops 60' down the rock to a pool below. The base of the falls makes a wonderful picnic spot.

**Driving Directions:** Follow Wasatch Boulevard to 11300 South where you'll find a trailhead parking lot on the east side of Wasatch Boulevard. (Be sure to park in the lot and not in the neighborhood.) Parking is free.

**Tips:** Older, more adventurous kids may want to scramble up the rocks to the north to get a scenic view of the Salt Lake Valley. There are no restrooms at the trailhead.

### Hike Five: **Terraces Picnic Ground to Elbow Fork**

Rating: **Moderate**

Distance: **3.5 miles roundtrip, 1,200' elevation gain**

**Why This Hike:** Cool and shady in the summer, this trail offers spectacular views at the end of its switchbacks.

**Hike Description:** You can hike this trail in either direction—from The Terraces up, or from Elbow Fork Trailhead down—or you can make it a one-way shuttle if you leave a second car at the other trailhead. The soft soil underfoot is in good condition, but be mindful of the occasional root hiding in the overgrown brush. If your kids want to add a bit more of a challenge on the way back, try the Pipeline Trail on the north side of the road. This creates a loop rather than an out-and-back. But if you do this, watch out for the occasional gonzo mountain biker on the Pipeline. Pack a lunch and make use of the beautiful, well-maintained picnic area.

**Driving Directions:** Follow Wasatch Boulevard to 3800 South and turn east. This turns into Mill Creek Canyon Road. The Terraces Picnic Ground is located on the right side of the road, 4.7 miles past the toll station. The Elbow Fork Trailhead at 6.4 miles (park on either side of the road when using this upper trailhead). Entrance fee to Mill Creek Canyon is \$2.25 per vehicle.

**Tips:** Beautiful all year long, this trail is particularly amazing in the fall when the aspen turn gold and the shrub oak are fiery red. There are restrooms at the trailhead.



REI's PEAK program uses a fun presentation filled with hands-on activities and games to teach kids ages 6 through 12 about taking care of the outdoors.

Ask an REI team member about scheduling a free PEAK presentation for your classroom or youth group, or visit [www.rei.com/PEAK](http://www.rei.com/PEAK) for more information.



**First Saturday in June** The American Hiking Society's National Trails Day, sponsored by REI, is a nationwide celebration of trails. Celebrate with your family by taking a hike, or volunteering for a trail clean-up project. Ask an REI team member about how to get involved, or visit [www.rei.com](http://www.rei.com) for more information.